

# County Line

News from the Government Offices of Lumpkin County, Georgia

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## Dedicated Employees are Gems

Employees who build long-term careers with Lumpkin County government are truly gems—assets to be treasured. Lana Pruitt of the Tax Commissioner's office not only is a gem, she also received one at the January meeting of the Board of Commissioners.

Recognized for 30 years of employment with the county, Lana was awarded a ruby service pin along with a county coin of excellence. Rachel Pruitt, also of the Tax

Commissioner's office, marks her 20<sup>th</sup> year of employment with the County just as she enters her first term as elected tax commissioner. Rachel received a service pin and county coin of excellence. All told, 30 employees were recognized for a collective 420 years of service to the citizens of Lumpkin County. They included Linda Kerns, Curtis Hatfield and Alan Roach, each with 15 years of service, as well as 10 employees with 10 years of service each and another 15 employees at 5 years and county.

## At Your Service: New County Website

Lumpkin County has exciting news.

There's a brand new website at [lumpkincounty.gov](http://lumpkincounty.gov).

For those who like to let their keyboards do the walking, the new website will take them anywhere they want to go in their county government. It features an event calendar, where meeting agendas and minutes will be posted. A complete department listing, highlighted with easy to identify icons, includes picture entries of department heads and elected officials and contact information for everyone in each department. There are current and past editions of the County Line/City Limits newsletters published since 2005 and a Photo Gallery illustrating county events to remember. Perhaps the most amazing feature of the website, though, is the Map Gallery. Visitors will find the official Future Land Use Map, as well as a variety of interactive maps depicting everything from roads, land lots and subdivisions to voting locations and precincts. There is also an interactive version of the [qpublic.com](http://qpublic.com) property assessment records. Especially useful for engineers, surveyors and other GIS users, data request forms will simplify the process of ordering products like 2-foot LIDAR contours, ortho imagery and an array of digital maps. "The new website is



attractive, easy to use and will help everyone from newcomers to long-time residents find information about their government quickly," says Allison Martin, a member of the website committee. "We were able to have it developed for a very reasonable fee," adds county manager Stan Kelley, "and it's constructed so we can easily add on more features—such as online purchasing and payments—down the road when the county can afford to offer them."

The county is eager to hear feedback from users. Please explore [www.lumpkincounty.gov](http://www.lumpkincounty.gov) and then click on Contact on the home page to share comments and suggestions by e-mail. And by the way, for those who prefer to communicate with their local government the old fashioned way, the information you need is still just a phone call away at 706-864-3742.

## Rx Discounts for Lumpkin Residents

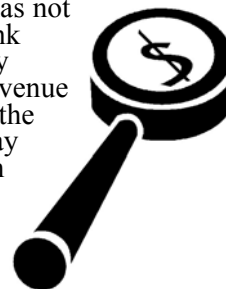
Through a joint effort between the county and the National Association of Counties (NACo), Lumpkin County residents now have access to discounts on prescription medicines not covered by insurance, Medicaid or Medicare. All you have to do is pick up a free prescription discount card, available at the Commissioners office in the county courthouse, the Park and Recreation Department Community Center, the



## County Adjusts Compensation to Preserve Jobs

Hard times have hit home for Lumpkin County employees, whose paychecks will be smaller this year than last, but the county so far has not had to give out "pink slips" to lay off any employees. The revenue needed to operate the government and pay employees—which comes from property taxes, sales taxes, permits, fees and other variable

sources—is already falling behind projections due to the state of the economy. Further adjustments to the county budget may need to be made as the year progresses, but decisions impacting basic services to citizens and the welfare of employees will never be made lightly, stresses county manager Stan Kelley, who opted to take a pay cut with his team. Stan says the recent decisions that had to be made about furloughs, salary reductions and overtime policy changes were among the toughest he's had to make. Please keep our county employees and all those impacted by the current recession in your thoughts as we make our way through this challenging year.



Senior Center, the Lumpkin County Health Department, Lumpkin County Library and the Community Helping Place. There are no enrollment forms,

no membership fees or other obligations. Simply present the card at a participating retail pharmacy (9 out of 10 pharmacies nationwide will accept the card) and you can save an average of 20 percent. You and your family may use the card for any prescription that is not covered by insurance, Medicaid or Medicare,

including diabetic medications and even medicines for your pets! Visit [caremark.com/naco](http://caremark.com/naco) to look up participating pharmacies, get price estimates on your prescriptions, check drug information or read about important health issues. Or, for more details, call 877-321-2652.

## Lumpkin County . . . continued from reverse side



### Canoe Take-out Nears Completion

What was envisioned years ago by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a Three Way Handshake Deal is finally nearing completion in the form of a canoe take-out site and the only legal, public access to the Chestatee River in Lumpkin County. The plan was to bring together investments from The Corps, a local government and the private sector for the benefit of public recreation. The Corps made available a 99-year lease of riverfront property along Highway 60 just north of Georgia 400 (and cleared several barriers to its public use). Lumpkin County committed to a list of site improvements (the county budget was tight at the time, but nothing like it is now). And Appalachian Outfitters owner Ben LaChance, whose canoe and kayak business upstream gave him a natural interest in the project, offered up the private investment. Using county labor and equipment, Lumpkin County has just completed the site work. Planning director Larry Reiter has sent the specs for the launch itself to the Corps for approval. When those plans are approved, Ben LaChance will move forward on his commitment—once he figures out how to build concrete steps leading into a river! In addition to the launch, Ben plans to construct a trail from the parking area to the river and a small covered shelter. There are plans for many more improvements once the economy improves and the county budget loosens up. The result will be a recreation site local residents and visitors will enjoy for years to come.

### Water Rate Increase: A Drop in the Bucket

The Lumpkin County Water & Sewerage Authority has adopted a rate change that will show up on customers' bills due March 10. For most customers, the



increase will be very small—just \$2.75 per month—with the average bill for three-quarters

of customers using the least water increasing from \$56.90 to \$58.94. The new tiered conservation rate structure was implemented to meet state EPD mandates and other legal requirements. The goal: to reward customers who conserve the most water. Residential customers using the least water (below 5,800 gallons per month) will not see a usage rate increase. Customers with higher than

### Bridge Leads to Low Maintenance Future

The Bridge over the Chestatee River at the end of Cavender's Creek Road may not have quite the same charm it once had, but it



won't have the constant maintenance expenses it once had either. The wooden decking has needed complete replacement about every five years, with repairs at least annually between deck replacements. So when Lumpkin County's public works department was offered metal grating—for the taking—from the Florida Department of Transportation, they jumped on the offer. They brought home the gifted decking for the cost of renting a truck, paying a driver and fueling up, just \$740. It's estimated that metal decking, which was installed in January, will last some 20 years.

Compare that to new wooden decking at a cost of some \$1,500, which would only have lasted five. And if you're one of those people who appreciate the appeal of an old bridge, take heart. Grindle Bridge still has the charming distinction of being the county's only remaining one-lane public bridge.

average water usage will be charged a higher rate per thousand gallons of water. Water bills for those customers may increase substantially, depending on actual water use. The base rate for water service increased by 10% for all customers.

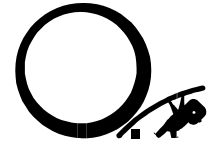
### Judicial Center Update

As February rolled in, drilling for the foundation piers of the new Judicial Center got underway. This was the first part of a two-part process that would end the month with a foundation in place and the concrete walls of the lower level of the building visible. By the time Spring gets going, we should see steel rising up from the ground.



At this point the project continues on budget and on schedule for

completion about a year from now. With the building itself well underway, project managers next will turn their attention to what's known as the FF&E—fixtures, furniture and equipment.



### Working for You!

If you have a problem, question or concern involving your county government, answers and assistance are as close as your phone or computer. For contact information for county departments or commissioners, see Dept. and Contact Info., [www.lumpkincounty.gov](http://www.lumpkincounty.gov) or call (706) 864-3742.

### Board of Commissioners

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Bill Scott, District 1  
Tim Bowden, District 2  
Clarence Stowers, District 3  
Clarence Grindle, District 4

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### Happy Trails

Permits were issued in early February and work has begun on the walking trails at Yahoola Creek Reservoir. The first part of the project will be construction of a pavilion. Once that's complete, the crews will hit the dirt, so to speak, and begin constructing the trails. The project is slated for completion at the end of this year.